

## THE NOBEL PRICE OF CURIOSITY HAS JUST BEEN AWARDED POSTHUMOUSLY TO LEONARDO DA VINCI

The Renaissance was a transition period from the Middle-Ages to the Modern Times. It began during the 14<sup>th</sup> century and ended at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Florence in Italy was the first source of the Renaissance, and then it was extended to France and spread all over Europe. There was a big artistic, literary and scientific revival after a thousand years of stagnancy. Big cities expanded a lot.

A new way of diffusing information appears: Gutenberg invented the printer around 1450. The representation of the world changes: Copernic and Galileo claimed at that time that the Earth wasn't the centre of the Solar system.

In this context, a young kid, who was going to become one of the greatest painters, the most talented person in the biggest number of different fields having ever lived, was born...



*The artist by himself*

### A LIFE IN SERVICE OF ART, SCIENCE, ROYAL COURTS,...

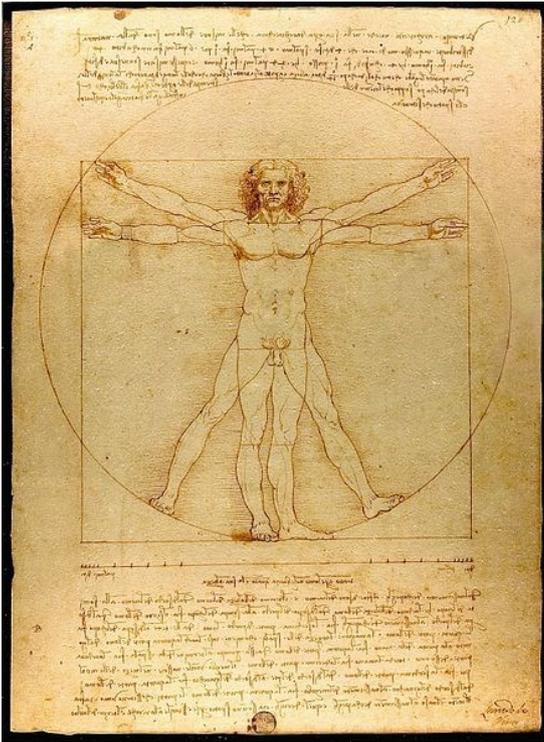
Leonardo da Vinci was born in Vinci, a small town of Toscana, next to Florence, on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1452. He died in Amboise, in France, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1519. He never married and never had children. He was left-handed.

Leonardo, before joining his father in 1466, in Florence, learnt reading and writing between twelve and fifteen years old. He became immediately a student of the painter and sculptor Andrea Del Verrocchio (whose workshop was then one of the two most important of Florence). He left him at the age of 26, with a brilliant reputation of painter. But he became a sculptor too.

From 1482 to 1499, he was invited by the duke Ludovico Sforza who wanted to improve the appearance and intellectual influence of its capital Mi-

lan. He painted only six paintings during this period, but it includes the Last Supper, which is very famous. In 1503, he came back to Florence, where he makes lots of scientific works. He started to paint Mona Lisa. He travelled a lot during that period, between Rome, Milan, and Florence.

In 1516, he has been noticed by the French king, Francis I. When the king returned in France, Leonard came with him, bringing Mona Lisa and other paintings. He lived in the manor of Cloux, which is now the Clos-Lucé. It was next to Amboise, where Francis I came to see him. He was the favorite of the king, who gave him the title of "first painter, engineer, and architect of the king". At that period of his life, Leonard wrote a lot. He died at the age of 67.



*The Vitruvian man*

All his life long, he wrote in his notebook, called the Codex. When Leonardo da Vinci died, his student Francesco Melzi kept the Codex. Then, through the centuries, it travelled a lot, to arrive finally in Bill Gates' hands. Now, it is the most expensive book of the world! Actually, it isn't exactly a book. Inside, there are drawings and theories. To write, Leonardo da Vinci used a specular writing, so to read the Codex, you have to place a mirror in front of the notebook.

Leonardo da Vinci was a polymath: he invented the plane, the helicopter, the car! He studied a lot the plants and anatomy, to improve his paintings. He was a poet and a philosopher, a painter and a sculptor. He was a scientist too. Actually, he was a genius, just as Galileo, Copernic, Michel Angelo...

## AN UNFORGETTABLE ARTIST

As a conclusion, Leonardo Da Vinci stayed, stays and will always stay in our memories for different reasons:

First, he was one of the great masters of his era, recognized as one of the first men analyzing and using the human figure in his anatomical works. The most known example of those searches is the Vitruvian man, drawing representing a man included in a circle and a square.

Then, he was again one of the first men of his era to be interested by complex architecture. We owe him the staircase of the Chambord castle, which makes

people going down not meet people going up. Today, the castle of Chambord is one of the most visited monuments in France.

Finally, he stays a mysterious artist, especially with his most famous work of art, which is the most enigmatic too: Mona Lisa. Indeed, she still asks questions: is she sad or happy? Why do her eyes can't stop staring at you? How does the sfumato create that sensation of perspective? Why is she so fascinating?

The mystery won't be resolved before a long time, and even never, perhaps... but he really rewarded this Nobel Price !



*Mona Lisa*

*L. DA Vinci 1507*